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MYSTERIES OF BYGONE WARS

DOMES OF WRATH

Vladimir V. Rubtsov

Some years ago, on a warm July night, the present author was sitting in a carriage of a train traveling to Kuban, a southern region of Russia. Together with Anatoliy Klimenko, his old friend and one of the first and the most active grass-root ufologists of the former Soviet Union, we were going to investigate a mystery of World War II (or, as it was usually designated in the USSR, the Great Patriotic War, or just The War).

Back in 1942 Anatoliy had observed a strange aircraft that he then believed to be a secret Soviet plane with "incredibly" advanced flight performance. Later he began to suspect that such characteristics were incredible in the literal sense of the word, and that no aircraft of such a type has ever been built on this planet. As a result, in the 1970's Anatoliy became a regular correspondent of Dr. Felix Zigel, "the father of Soviet ufology." He had collected a vast amount of information on UFO observations in the territory of the Donetsk Region of Ukraine in the years when the very word "UFO" was strictly prohibited by the top Soviet authorities. It was supposed that every good Soviet citizen had to consider the UFO phenomenon as non-existent. Anatoliy Klimenko, one of a few "ufological dissidents," had not been convinced by newspaper articles signed by renowned names from the Soviet academic community. He regarded the authors of the papers as ignoramuses (in the field of ufology) and hypocrites (as regards their morality), remaining a strong adherent of the extraterrestrial hypothesis of the origin of UFOs. He hoped that having analyzed a sufficiently large set of UFO observations it would be possible to understand the principles of flight of these ET spacecraft.

We became friends in the process of our joint work on UFO reports published in the first volume of the famous Samizdat book *UFO Observations in the USSR*, authored by Dr. Zigel. (By the way, a great part of its seven volumes containing more than 1000 very interesting UFO reports still remains accessible only for those readers who command the Russian language.) After we had exchanged several letters about these and other sightings, I visited Anatoliy to discuss the collected materials on the spot and to converse with other witnesses of UFO phenomena (in the summer of 1967 there was a big "UFO wave" in southern regions of the USSR). Of course, in our talks we did not confine ourselves to these sightings only, discussing also other anomalous events, about which we had happened to read or to hear.

One of these events was the enigmatic death of a group of tourists in the Ural Mountains that occurred in 1959. This case was not published, but rumors spread widely and for many years it remained a popular topic of conversation in the community of Soviet ufologists and anomalists in general. Even though the exact circumstances of this event were somewhat vague, the descriptions aroused great interest and froze the audience's blood. According to one version of the story, the faces of the victims were set in deep horror. This detail unexpectedly (for me) impressed Anatoliy very much. "You know, Vladimir, said he thoughtfully, I ran into a similar case as far back as the War!... This happened in Kuban. Would you like me to tell the story?..." Of course I would. And he told me one of the strangest stories I have ever heard.

The story astonished me so much that we immediately decided, when I visited Anatoliy again the next year, to leave for Kuban to try and find other possible witnesses of this incident.

...And now Anatoliy and me, we are sitting in a carriage, he is dozing in a corner of our compartment and I am looking through the window glass at the night darkness recalling in my mind all the details of his account...

Kuban, Last Days of German Occupation

On January 29, 1943, Cossack villages and hamlets, lying along the railway leading from Krasnodar to Tikhoretsk, stood still in anxious anticipation.

Having started on New Year's Day, the retreat of the southern group of German troops soon turned into a panic flight. The German Command made desperate attempts to stabilize the collapsing front line. Between



Fig. 1. General view of the battlefield. Red crosses denote German soldiers in the ambush; blue arrows denote directions of German strikes; red arrow denotes the direction of movement of the Russian column. Credit: Anatoliy Klimenko, Novo-Amvrosievka, Ukraine

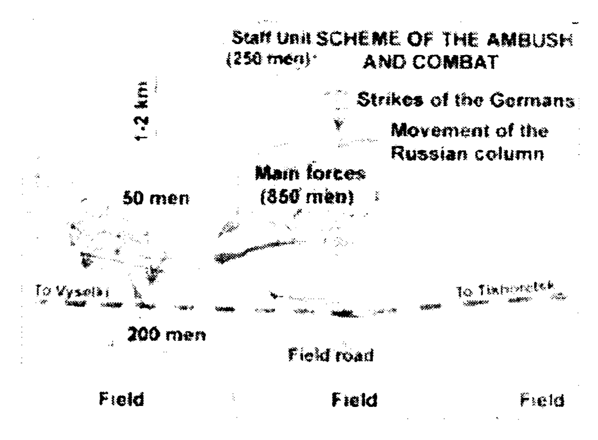


Fig. 2. Scheme of the ambush and combat. Credit: Anatoliy Klimenko

Krasnodar and Tikhoretsk they were building a defense belt. It was expected that heavy battles would occur in this territory. But the Stalingrad front was swiftly advancing, creating a threat of encirclement for the German armies on the Caucasus and Kuban, and on January 30 their retreat recommenced. Late in the night of January 29–30, signal shots from cannons transmitted the retreat order throughout the whole front.

In the winter of 1942–1943 Anatoliy Klimenko was only 15 and he lived, together with his mother and some other relatives, at a hamlet of the Red Banner *kolkhoz* (collective farm), in Vyselki district, about seven kilometers from the *stanitsa* (Cossack village) of Berezanskaya. Soviet troops took this region on the night of January 30–31. There was practically no fighting, fortunately for local inhabitants. But nevertheless, on the night of January 29, not far from the settlement of Chelbas, there occurred a strange incident...

There was much discussion among the neighbors about this incident and it so happened that its main witness, an old carter, proved to be a distant relative of the owner of the house where Anatoliy and his family were residing.

In Soviet military reports of that time this event would have been probably described as follows: “In the southern sector of the front our military unit drove on the march a wedge into the enemy lines. It was suddenly attacked and, in a close-quarters battle, it completely eliminated, at the cost of heavy casualties, a larger unit of enemy forces.” At least, just such an impression could have been formed at first sight on the facts of the case. But in reality everything proved to be much more complicated...

At midday of January 29, when German troops were still attempting to build a defense line, the old carter went from the hamlet for hay to feed some hungry cows, but was stopped by a German patrol. An infantry regiment was entrenching itself on a high hill dominating the surroundings.

At night the signal to retreat thundered out. Having ascertained that there were no Germans at the hamlet any longer, the old man went off again for the hay. After reaching the spot where he had been stopped the day before, he discovered to his horror that, in the morning foggy haze, he had driven into the very lines of the German military unit. Lying around on the snow around him were sleeping German soldiers...

The terrified old man started turning his horse round and suddenly saw before him recumbent soldiers in Soviet uniform, with red stars on their *ushankas* (warm caps with earflaps). Having mastered his fright, the old man approached the lying people and leaned over them. They were neither sleeping nor simply lying down before each others' enemies. They were frozen corpses!

In vain the old man was running about across the field trying to find at least somebody only wounded and not dead. There was not a single living soul...

On February 5 or 6, some Soviet officers arrived at the battlefield to identify the dead soldiers. When talking with them, local inhabitants became aware that the officers were looking for a military unit that had disappeared about a week before. It did not arrive at its destination in time, and all traces of it had vanished. The identification confirmed that all the dead Soviet soldiers belonged to this military unit, so the officers left, believing the affair more or less clear. But the local residents who were burying the dead were of a different opinion. Nobody could understand how the combat had occurred...

Judging from the corpses' positions and additional information obtained from the above-mentioned officers, the case was as follows (see Figs. 1 and 2)... A Soviet infantry battalion, while moving to its destination at the forward area, temporarily lost orientation and, after restoring it, hastened to correct its mistake and to reach the place in time. They were moving swiftly along the front line.

Time was pressing on the battalion commander, and the topography of the country, through which the battalion was moving, made it impossible to send out side patrols. As a result, the Soviet military began to ascend from a deep valley to the railway line, not even suspecting that German observers had noticed their motion and an ideal, from the military point of view, ambush had been laid before them. There lay hidden on the both sides of the road some 300 submachine-gunners forming a fatal fire pocket, exposing them to two-sided flanking fire at almost point-blank range. Besides, some 60 German soldiers had taken cover in the bushes near a ravine at about 10–12 meters from the road, and up to 250 soldiers dropped flat in two ranks in a shelter-belt behind the railroad.

And when our column had drifted right into the trap, the German machine guns blazed away.

This probably happened at twilight, since in the day-time both the trenches on the hill and the gunners in the ambush would have been discovered in good time.

Under the hail of submachine-gun bullets these men had only one opportunity to escape to go forward and to break through the enemy lines. And they attempted to use this, their last chance. The vanguard of the column rushed forward, to a saddle near the hill. There occurred a hand-to-hand fight with a result inevitable for such an alignment of forces...

Thus there was in fact no combat. There was a cruel, inhuman massacre, in which one side opened up with all its fire power and almost all its adversaries fell before taking up arms. Up to this point the picture of the event is obvious enough.

But then something truly incomprehensible happened...

The Enigma

...Namely: next moment, says Anatoliy Klimenko, all the German soldiers, both those participating in the fight and those remaining spectators, got their deserts. They perished on the spot, all of them, every man jack of them. What is more, another unit of the same regiment, stationed in the rear, at about 1–2 kilometers from the battlefield, was destroyed in the same manner: all the soldiers remained in their positions.

The total German losses reached some 1350 men. As for the Soviet soldiers, the fallen were found only on the road and in the saddle.

So, a first enigma: *who* destroyed the German regiment after the Soviet battalion had been annihilated? The hamlet where Anatoliy was living was liberated only one day later; until then, no Soviet troops were observed in the vicinity of it. And a second enigma, closely associated with the first one: *how* was it done, *with what weapon*? An artillery or aircraft bombardment can be ruled out: residents of the hamlet located at about 3–5 km from the battlefield did not hear any sounds of combat. Perhaps, with broken ground in between, bursts of submachine-gun fire might not be heard. But shell-bursts, as well as the roar and volleys of diving airplanes would certainly have been noticed. A sudden tank attack was impossible: the locality is jagged with deep ravines; besides, the tanks would have left plenty of traces.

At last—or rather, first of all—no large shell or bomb craters were discovered in either of the two sites of destruction. The corpses of Soviet soldiers had numerous bullet wounds, but the German soldiers' wounds were more consistent with sudden detonation of the ammunition (in haversacks, cartridge pouches, and simply in the hand). Throughout the whole battlefield, littered with rifles and submachine guns, there was literally not a single live cartridge or hand-grenade. Every round of rifle ammunition, every hand grenade, every explosive device in the German positions had detonated spontaneously, wherever it happened to be: in rifles' magazines, in the pouches of soldiers' equipment, in the backs of vehicles, in boxes on the ground. All these munitions appeared to have exploded simultaneously. Besides, many corpses had no visible injuries at all but the faces of the fallen were distorted with wild horror. This last feature especially bewildered the old experienced front-line soldiers who had seen much in their lives. None of them could recall a case when soldiers who had been killed in battle were found with such expressions on their faces.

The action of the unknown attack was, most likely, sudden, and simultaneous for all participants of the combat, since none of them had time enough to leave his position. For example, in the shelterbelt, where up to 250



Fig. 3. Anatoliy Klimenko before our trip to Chelbas

submachine-gunners had dropped flat, there no enlarged space between the soldiers was discovered. What kind of death found them so quickly and so precisely, that not one of them could retreat or at least move back slightly?

Of the weapons that existed in the years of World War II, only poison gases had characteristics that to some extent corresponded to these. Although, fearing retaliatory actions by the states of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, Germany did not risk using them on a large scale, such a threat remained real until the very end of the war. But there did occur several cases where poison gases were used locally—for instance, in the Crimea, against guerilla fighters and military units who were hiding in Crimean catacombs.

It was rumored that at a German store of weapons, situated in Tikhoretsk, there was a small stock of some special shells—maybe chemical ones—guarded by a special-duty squad of SS men. The fate of these shells is vague, but who knows—maybe it was moved away from Tikhoretsk by the regiment participating in the above-described combat. During this combat, the shells could have detonated due to an accidental hit and manifested their killing power ...

This supposition can explain some details of the event, such as the death of all living beings in a large area, the lack of injuries on corpses, and even the horror impressed on



Fig.4. Anatoliy Klimenko with Chelbas residents

their faces... But it does not explain everything. Thus, normal ammunition could hardly have detonated due to poison gases... And anyway, the second site of destruction remains incomprehensible. Why such a strange synchronicity?

Anatoliy Klimenko talked with local residents in summer 1943, half a year after the enigmatic combat had happened. And now, fifty years later, we were going to the place...

Trip to Chelbas

Having arrived on another summer morning in Tikhoretsk, we left by a local electric train for the settlement of Chelbas. (Figs. 3 and 4.) This was where, according to Anatoliy's memories, the strange event of the last war had occurred. Decades later, the locality had certainly changed, but after a persistent search and consultations with local citizens we did find the supposed battlefield. Of course, there were no traces of the battle and we did not hope to find there anything material. The local residents were most hospitable (in the home of one of them we spent three nights), but could help only a little. True, a few old men remembered that some combat had happened at this place, but could not give us any details.

“Well, said Anatoliy, at least, since we are here, we can check one thing... ” He took from his knapsack a map, a ruler, and a protractor and started to measure something on the map. Several minutes later, Anatoliy lifted his head and said with a touch of perplexity in his voice: “You know, Vladimir, within the limits of an error of five degrees the direction to this place coincides with... er-

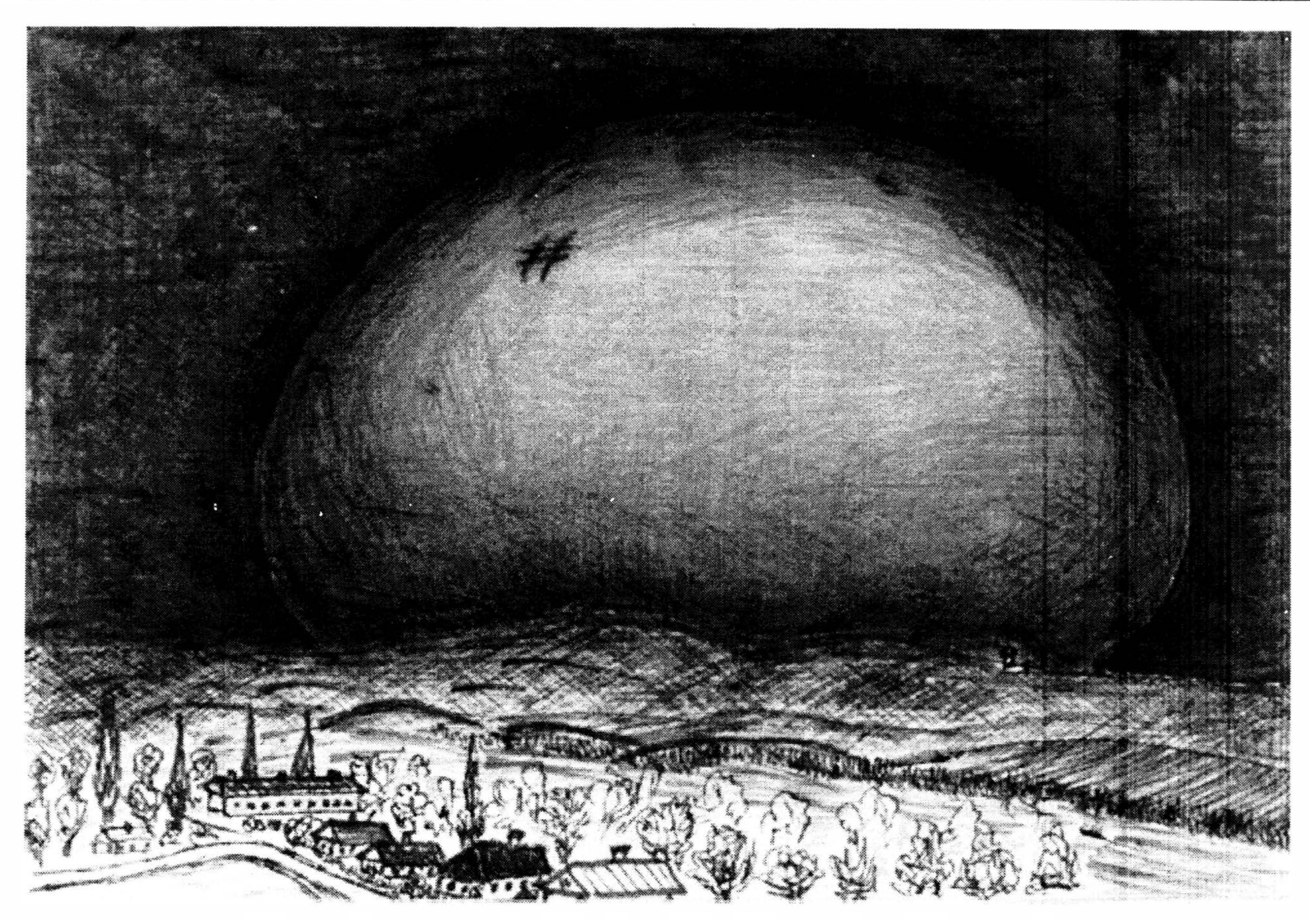


Fig.5. The first spheroid at the moment of its climax. Credit: Anatoliy Klimenko

er... well, with the direction to the spheroids..." "Which spheroids?" asked I in amazement. And Anatoliy explained...

Fiery Hemispheres

In the tense and fearful atmosphere of wartime he and other teenagers played the role of observers, being obliged to inform the adults about various dangers—that arose, naturally enough, rather frequently.

One evening, late in January 1943 (probably it was January 29, since next day the hamlet was liberated by Soviet troops), Anatoliy paced up and down near the wicket gate, keeping a vigilant eye on the neighborhood, continually sweeping the horizon. The sun had set and twilight was deepening. A gray, cloudy day was fading away. The day before, bursts of fire had rung out and pillars of smoke risen everywhere: the retreating German troops were burning down and blowing up everything they could not take with them. But this evening was exceptionally still and dark.

Looking towards the northeast by east, somewhat to the right of Tikhoretsk, Anatoliy suddenly saw a very curious phenomenon.

Against the background of the approaching gray darkness, from behind the skyline (open in this sector of the horizon to a great distance), there appeared a low red glow. It reached, as far as Anatoliy could judge, not less than one kilometer in length, resembling the burning of stubble on an autumn field.

For a few seconds, the glow was twinkling and oscillating, then it started to rise quickly, taking the shape of a clearly outlined shining fiery bubble. Over a period of 10–20 seconds, this bubble increased to an enormous size, many times greater than the visible dimensions of the solar disk at sunset. Sharp, clear, ideally-geometric contours of a spheroid with a well-defined roundish, convex surface... A soft, not very bright red light somewhat resembling that of the rising moon... For the whole war Anatoliy had seen nothing like this. He was especially astonished by the peculiar behavior of the spheroid. Having reached its maximal dimensions, it seemed to stand still for two to three minutes, continuing to glow with red light quite evenly, without any oscillations or any signs of inner movements. Neither curling flames, nor gleams of explosions, nor dark smoky streaks could be seen on its smooth, as

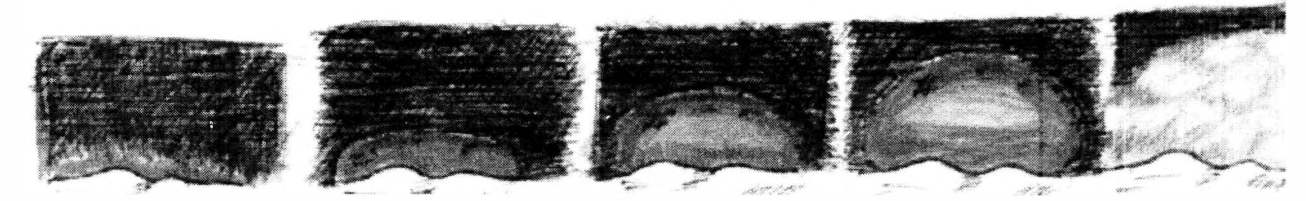


Fig. 6. Successive stages of the spheroid development from its inception until decay. Credit: Anatoliy Klimenko

if polished, surface. It was exactly like a gigantic soap bubble, full of fire! (See Figs. 5 and 6).

Eventually, the spheroid started to change. The red tone faded and grew dimmer, being replaced here and there by whitish spots... Then the spheroid began to splinter into separate pale scraps. The decay was developing; between the scraps there appeared the dark cloudy evening sky, and the scraps themselves faded, and appeared to dissolve in the surrounding space.

Finally, all of this vanished. Darkness fell again, but Anatoliy was still looking, like an enchanted person, at the place where the red glow had just been blazing. Now there was nothing at all: no glow, no spark, no smoke...

Suddenly, some three minutes after, the phenomenon reappeared, this time about two or three kilometers to the left of its former position. Dimensions of the second spheroid were not so impressive: maybe 700–800 meters at its base. A few minutes later it too disappeared, falling apart like the first one. (Fig. 7.)

A very curious feeling was evoked by these spheroids in Anatoliy's mind. Having seen many terrible things during the war, having been at the very center of heavy bombing attacks, he had never felt anything similar to that feeling. This was the sensation of a horrible disaster—relentlessly approaching, merciless, and inevitable. It was intensified by the complete lack of any sounds, which—if these spheroids had been due to normal explosions—would have been heard for tens of kilometers around. On the whole, the picture was so different from anything that Anatoliy had seen during the war, that he did not even raise the alarm, just standing near the wicket gate and looking at the horizon. But one could see in the darkness not a single gleam of light or wisp of smoke...

Being aware that near Tikhoretsk there were located two German stores of ammunition, Anatoliy decided that it was these stores that were blown up that evening. Even though there was in fact no similarity between these spheroids and such explosions (and the very supposition proved to be wrong:

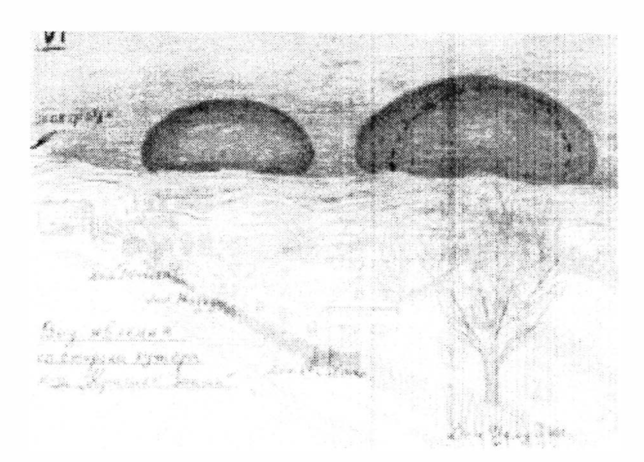


Fig. 7. Two spheroids as they were seen by Anatoliy Klimenko (depicted together for comparison; in reality they appeared separately). Credit: Anatoliy Klimenko

one of these stores of ammunition was blown up next day, and the other one was salvaged by our advancing troops), this pseudo-explanation has overshadowed, as happens frequently, a true enigma.

A Secret Weapon?

Strange though it may seem, but until we came to the place of the enigmatic combat, Anatoliy did not associate it with these—no less enigmatic—spheroids. The point was not only that he had not got precise coordinates of the battlefield nor those of the spheroids; just the very supposition did not come to his mind. Only after discovering that the first spheroid was located almost on the straight line connecting the battlefield with his "observing post" of 1943 (although there was no data that would make possible to determine its exact location on this line), Anatoliy realized that there might be a direct association between these two mysteries. There were *two* spheroids—and *two* sites of destruction; the lesser spheroid corresponded to the lesser site of destruction, and the greater spheroid to the greater one.

"But you said that these things had looked like oceans of fire," I said. "Why then were there no traces of burning on the battlefield?"



Fig. 8. Fiery hemisphere as it was seen by Nikolay Kernozhitskiy. Credit: Nikolay Kernozhitskiy, Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Russia

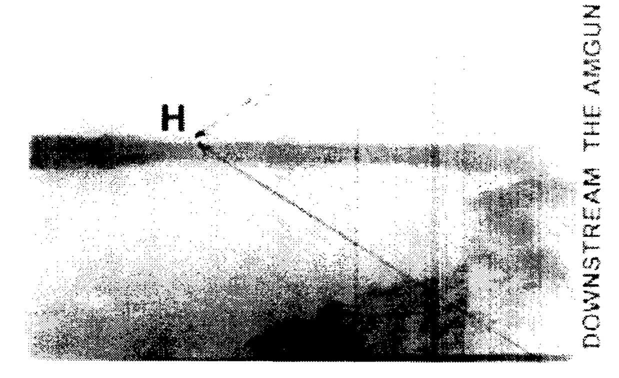


Fig. 9. The Amgun river. H denotes the place where the fiery hemisphere appeared in August 1947. Credit: Nikolay Kernozhitskiy

"True," replied Anatoliy. "It can mean the spheroids' glow was 'cold', a luminescence-like one... But what could it be, then?!"

On our way back we were hotly discussing possible hypothetical explanations of these events. The hypothesis of a "Wunderwaffe" ("miracle-weapon") that had been more than once promised by Adolf Hitler to his allies and enemies did not look absolutely unfounded. Perhaps, an experimental prototype of such a weapon was tested near Tikhoretsk and the result of this test proved to be, so to speak, too successful: the weapon went to work and destroyed its users, if not its creators. What is more, an additional argument in favor of this hypothesis (indirect though) suddenly emerged just a month after my return from Chelbas to Kharkov...

Working part-time for the well-known Russian popular-science magazine *Tekhnika-Molodyozhi* (TM), I communicated with those TM readers who wished to report about their anomalous experiences. The number of TM copies sold reached 1,700,000 per issue, so it is understandable that we were not short of such reports. Some of them were published in a TM section specially devoted to various mysteries (its title was "Anthology of Mysterious Cases"). And lo and behold! soon after my return to Kharkov I received in a regular set of readers' letters forwarded to me from Moscow a letter from a Nikolay Kernozhitskiy, a resident of Komsomolsk-on-Amur, a far-eastern Russian city. It was so informative that I would like to cite it almost in full:

"This happened in August 1947, in the village of Malyshevsk [P. Osipenko district, Khabarovsk Territory, Russia]. The exact date has evaporated from my memory, since I was then only seven and not yet even in school. In a small club-house, *kolkhozniks* [collective farmers] were watching a film. It was about 9 PM, maybe 9.30 PM. Suddenly somebody opened the door from outside and a woman's voice began to call everybody out to the street, shouting: "fire, fire!"

All of us immediately poured out onto the street. We, the kids, opened our eyes and mouths in amazement. The adults talked loudly, convincing each other that it was not a fire.

Down the Amgun [a tributary of the Amur river], in a north-easterly direction, there slowly ascended from behind the edge of the forest a red glow. A minute after, it turned into a huge red fiery hemisphere, inspiring horror in the minds of both children and adults. (See Fig. 8.)

The immense red dome over the forest shone fearfully with its even, sinister-red, color, giving no flashes or noise. As far as I can recall, one could see slight fluctuations of red light—as if there was inside the hemisphere some turbulence. But maybe it was due to turbulence of the air surrounding the hemisphere.

Someone said that such a glow had been observed before the [Great Patriotic] War at the "Vesyoliy" gold mine. Some women crossed themselves and sobbed, looking helplessly at the men, and the latter, in turn, exchanged glances in perplexity. The adults began to herd the kiddies into the club-house. We were terrified and therefore we ran into the building without a word. Then the adults also started to come back. Somebody said: "To hell with it! What will be will be!" "Turn the film on!"

The projectionist started the film again. Someone closed the door with a brief comment: "That's all, it went out. That's not a fire."

As far as I remember, it was a dark, moonless evening. The enigmatic red hemisphere was seen for about five to six minutes...

When the film ended, all the people went out, looking in the direction where, one hour before, had shone something silent, ominous, and inexplicable. We, the children, asked the adults what this had been, but nobody was able to explain the occurrence. Some men dismissed the matter with a wave of the hand, whereas the women told us it had been God and if we were disobedient, He would punish us. <...>

The village of Malyshevsk had at that time 32 homesteads, or some 130 residents. About a half of them saw the red hemisphere. Many of these people live now at the settlement of P. Osipenko, at 18 kilometers from Malyshevsk up the Amgun river, others have gone away. Interestingly, no resident of P. Osipenko saw this huge hemisphere when it appeared.

Down the Amgun, at 25 kilometers from Malyshevsk, there lies the way station of Gagtzinka. At that time there lived and worked Gushchin, a communication technician and coachman, with his family. As far as I know, they did not see this phenomenon either. One can therefore conclude that the red hemisphere was seen only from Malyshevsk. <...> This suggests the idea that the hemisphere arose at a distance of several kilometers only, at an uninhabited place at the southern part of the Kivun mountain range. This place remains unpopulated even at present. Perhaps, if it had been searched in time, some traces of the hemisphere would have been found. But at least one thing seems to me quite clear: this was not a forest fire. Neither it could be ball lightning: too enormous was the hemisphere, not less than 500 meters at its base."

Having compared Kernozhitskiy's picture (Fig. 8) with those drawn by Klimenko (Figs. 5–7), I became certain that these phenomena were very similar in appearance. Of the same opinion was Anatoliy, to whom I showed the picture some time later. He was amazed and simply repeated: "What a wonderful depiction! What an observant man!"

At my request, Nikolay Kernozhitskiy went again to the Amgun river, questioned former residents of Malyshevsk, and traversed the peninsula at the bend of Amgun near this village. (See Fig. 9.) Some old people did confirm his recollections, but nothing strange was found in the taiga. The azimuth of the point where the hemisphere had appeared, being determined by compass, proved to be 68 degrees east of north.

In principle, if the spheroids seen by Anatoliy Klimenko in 1943 were due to a German secret weapon, the latter could have been captured by the Soviet Army and tested in 1947 in the Soviet Far East. True, no information about any proving ground located near Malyshevsk is available... And it could hardly have been concealed so effectively. Besides, when Nikolay Kernozhitskiy revisited the site, he could not find traces of any unusual installations in this region. Dismantled? Who knows... But when I discussed this question with Anatoliy, he confessed that the "secret weapon hypothesis" seemed to him unconvincing. At least, when we mean a *German* secret weapon. And he reminded me about his own observation of a "strange aircraft"...

A UFO of 1942

This episode happened in mid-August, 1942, shortly after the Germans came to the hamlet where the Klimenkos lived. Being a very curious boy, Anatoliy poked his nose into all military business and spent day after day rushing about the environs. So, once he was overtaken by night about a kilometer from the hamlet. Anatoliy was walking back home by a dirt road quite empty at that time of day. He was to cross a bridge over a local river, and the hamlet was on the opposite bank of the river, to the left of the bridge.

A German car was coming up behind Anatoliy, which was dangerous at night, and he hid in the maize on the roadside. The car passed some 300 meters and stopped, the doors banged. It seemed that the people in it came out to have a breath of fresh air. Anatoliy could distinctly hear German speech.

He left his shelter in the maize and went on the road, intending, before he went as far as the car, to take a short cut across the field. But when Anatoliy was about 100 meters from the car, he suddenly felt something unpleasantly alarming, some queer sort of sense of danger from behind him, which surprised him very much, since he had got used to dangers and thought them a kind of children's game in his daily risk of life.

The night was quite calm and still, all sounds could be heard distinctly at a distance, but it was dead-silent behind Anatoliy (though he was on the alert to hear if another car appeared which meant almost certainly death at that time; therefore he is quite sure there came no sounds from behind).

By mere intuition, Anatoliy spotted the point of danger: looking back over his shoulder, he saw a shower of sparks, like a burning airplane motor, that was approaching

him. It looked like a half-smouldering, half-burning bundle of rags. This fire was flying and visibly descending. The road ran down from a hill towards the bridge, and the thing followed this feature of the ground, or maybe fell a little steeper. One or two seconds later the fire drew level with Anatoliy. His first thought was that this was a falling bomber with stopped motors, because he heard no noise. If it had been a falling plane, it would have hit the ground some 100 to 200 meters from him, and he threw himself into the roadside ditch, though continuing his observation.

However it did not fall. By this time it became clear to Anatoliy that the flying object was not a plane. When shot down, a falling plane makes a lot of various sounds, even with its motors off: still rotating propellers, the whistle of the air, the roar of flame, etc. There was however dead silence. Even the Germans at the car stopped talking, possibly struck by the vision as well. The distance from the flying object was not large, about 50–100 meters, and the altitude about the same.

But the most striking was the shape of the flame: it was elongated perpendicular to the plane of the flight and behaved as if there was no head wind. The flame looked like a comma of fire or rather a rumpled broom, twisted a little like an arc, its shaft down. Anatoliy could distinctly see individual "twigs," dull red strips that melted below into solid fire of the same color. There were also coarse sparks between the strips. The lower part of the glow was partly screened by something opaque. And behind the whole, there seemed to be seen a huge vertical plane body, quite different from an aircraft fuselage.

For all its dynamism, the image seemed quite motionless, as though it had been a color picture brought before Anatoliy's eyes. The sparks and strips of fire might be thought to come from a center below with great force. However it was only the whole system which in fact moved, its details being motionless.

The fire reached the river, its flight there becoming level, and began to ascend smoothly. That was obviously too much for a falling plane! Anatoliy understood that the thing was flying at a constant altitude, strictly following the terrain. Beyond the bridge, near the village of Berezanskaya, there was a small hollow, and Anatoliy was interested to see what would happen. The object responded to it by descending a little, though the alteration of the altitude was only a few meters. He watched the object until it disappeared over the horizon about a minute later.

When the thing had disappeared and Anatoliy wanted to move on, he was stopped by excited voices from the Germans near the car. For some ten minutes, there was a fuss among them; then the car engine started, they departed, and Anatoliy could go on his way.

On reflection, he thought he had seen some new Soviet air vehicle on a reconnaissance flight. If it sensed the ground so well, then certainly it could detect accumulated machinery! And, however strange it may seem, this mysterious phenomenon increased Anatoliy's confidence in our final victory.

Doubts and Considerations

UFOs of World War II are a separate subject matter, worthy of serious consideration and investigation. The famous "foo-fighters" are certainly not the only type of strange objects that were observed in wartime skies. There are many other interesting reports from both sides of the front as well. But is there any connection between the red spheroids of 1943, the enigmatic destruction of a German regiment, and unidentified flying objects that seem to have appeared from time to time over battlefields of the bloodiest war of the last century? Even if we suppose that UFOs are extraterrestrial probes, such a connection is at least not evident...

In general, the story itself may also be doubted in some its aspects. Anatoliy *did see* the spheroids, but only *heard* about the circumstances of the mysterious combat. What part of this information is trustworthy and what part should be considered as a sort of folklore at best, remains unknown. Nonetheless, it does seem to be worthy of checking (say, in military archives which are at present no longer secret). Being, as was said above, a strong supporter of the ET hypothesis of UFO origin, Anatoliy believes that these craft have been keeping our terrestrial civilization under observation over many decades, if not centuries. But again, where is any piece of proof of UFO involvement in these incidents?

"No," Anatoliy told me quite frankly, "I cannot prove my supposition. You may consider it as a simple play of mind. But if these aliens were in fact flying and observing over such a long period..."

"But only flying and observing!..." I said, perhaps somewhat too fervently.

"Well," he replied in a very reserved manner, "a sensitive alien could eventually get sick of being *only an observer...*"

THE PROBLEM OF PALEOVISITS

THE DROPA OF BAIAN-KARA-ULA

Chris Aubeck

Mysterious Plates from Mountain Caves

In July 1962 a German magazine called *Das vegetarische Universum* [The Vegetarian Universe] published an article about a strange finding made in the mountains between China and Tibet. Despite the very small "crash" element in this story, it is a tale that regularly turns up in UFO crash lists in books, magazines and on the Internet. It therefore deserves our attention.

12,000-year-old Groove Writing Tells of Air Vehicles

(DINA), Tokyo, July.

In the borderland between Tibet and China lies the cave area of the high mountains of Baian-Kara-Ula. Here the strange discovery of hieroglyphic writing tablets was made 25 years ago.

Several thousand years ago, record-shaped plates were sawed out of the hardest granite rock, with untraceable and completely unknown appliances, by humans whose appearance the Chinese researchers have only a vague conception of.

So far 716 rock plates from Baian Kara Ula have been found, looking exactly like records. From a hole in the centre, a double groove spirals out to the outer edge. Naturally enough, the most interesting thing is not the clay grooves but the strangest writing ever discovered in China and probably in the whole world.

It took over two decades for archaeologists and experts in ancient writings and hieroglyphics to decipher the grooved writing. The content has so stunned the Academy of Prehistory in Peking that they did not initially want the scholar Professor Tsum Um-nui to publish his report. Then, however, he did it anyway.

With four colleagues, the archaeologist Tsum Um-nui came to this conclusion: "The grooved writing tells of vehicles from the air, which must have arrived 12000 years ago, according to the plates. In one place it says literally: 'The Dropa came down from the clouds with their air gliders. Ten times the men, women and children of the Kham hid in the caves until dawn. Afterwards they understood the signs and saw that the Dropa came with peaceful intentions'..."

Findings of the Dropa and Kham race had been made before in the high mountain caves. Archaeologists today cannot yet classify ethnologically these very small humans of only up to 1.30 meters tall. There is no parallel to the Chinese, Mongolians or Tibetans.

One can naturally assume that millennia ago a scribe of the Kham made a joke about "vehicles from the air," or that it was just a superstition. Yet this would be to ignore statements made in the other hieroglyphic grooves, [such as] a complaint about the fact that the very "air fleet" itself was destroyed by landing in the almost inaccessible mountains, and that the way to build a new one was given.

The hieroglyphics of Baian-Kara-Ula seem so mysterious to Chinese archaeology that [scholars] only make scientific use of them with caution.

Rock particles were scraped off one of the writing plates and were sent for analysis to Moscow. A sensational discovery was made: The grooved plates are strongly cobalt and metallic. When a whole plate was tested with an oscillograph, a surprising rhythm of oscillation showed up, as though, once "loaded," the plates with the grooved writing would have somehow served as electrical conductors.

Nobody can say, what is behind these grooved writing plates from 12,000 years ago. Suppositions would be too daring and not sufficiently objective. One remembers, however, the old Chinese legend of small thin yellow humans, who came "from the clouds" and because of their ugliness – an unusually large, wide head on a spindly body – were avoided by all and were killed by the "men with the fast horses" (Mongols?).

In fact, the 12,000 years old grave and skeleton remains were located in the caves. Findings of the so-called Dropa and Kham race actually exhibited a slight build and an enormous head.

The puzzle of Baian-Kara-Ula becomes even more complicated because there have

been found pictures cut into the walls of the cave where the plates lay, depicting the rising sun, the moon and the stars and between it whole swarms of pea-size dots, which approach in elegant momentum the mountains and the Earth's surface.

Reinhardt Wegemann

The Roots of the Story

The first thing to note about this story is that very few who support the reality of it know anything about its origins. Whole books and articles have been written on or around this tale with absolutely no reference to its author or first publication. This absence of detail is what gives the impression that its origins are "shrouded in mystery," and therefore leaves its reality status open to all sorts of theories.

My own attempt to shed some light on the origin of the story began with a search for the journalist responsible for the report, Reinhardt Wegemann. Unfortunately, after two years' inquiring through colleagues and journalist friends, and conducting thorough searches of newspaper archives, I could not locate any German writer of this name. Furthermore, nobody could tell me anything about the DINA news agency, either. Therefore, to this day, I have not been able to confirm the existence of either entity.

Whether or not the DINA news agency ever existed is of secondary importance, as important reasons exist to doubt the legitimacy of the report itself. In July 1964 the same article was published again, as if new, in the German UFO magazine *UFO-Nachrichten*. Here, Wegemann made no mention of the fact that the report had been published before, and added no new revelations about the discs. He even repeated the claim that the discovery had taken place "25 years ago," even though 27 years would have passed by then. However, the wording in some parts of the article was different (probably indicating that it had been hurriedly re-written for republication) and the writer now mentioned another name, an archaeologist called Tschi Pu-tei.

It was from that moment on that the "Dropa" would become famous all over the world. The French/Belgian UFO organization BUFOI published a report on it in March 1965, and in 1966 it was translated for the first time into Russian and published by the Soviet journal *Neman*. A year later, the well-known Russian philologist and anomalist Dr. Vyacheslav Zaitsev wrote about the discs of Baian Kara Ula for the first edition of the Soviet magazine *Sputnik* [1]. Owing to the enormous distribution of this publication, many have cited Zaitsev as the original source of the story, implying that the story was first written in Russian, but evidently this was not the case.

In 1967 the news was published for the first time in the United States. On February 26th a journalist of the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, using the article from *Sputnik*, compared the finding of the cave drawings to the star map supposedly seen by the famous abductee, Betty Hill. Naturally, there is no mention whatsoever of Reinhardt Wegemann, whose name would never be associated with the Dropa again.

Due to the transmission of the article from one language to another, over the next three decades certain details were lost, others invented, and the spelling of the name of the tribe, the "Dropa," became increasingly exotic: Dzopa, Dhzopa, Dzohpa, Dhropa, and so on. (As part of my own research I amassed hundreds of pages discussing the lives and customs of the real tribe, spelt Drokpa, and can state that these poor people are fortunate not to know about all the nonsense surrounding their history and alleged physical appearance!).

This is not all.

After 1967 the story began to change so much that nobody knew which parts belonged to the original version – a version that everybody seemed to have forgotten. On the other hand, the most serious researchers started to feel more than a little sceptical of the whole issue. In 1973 the then-consultant of the British magazine *Flying Saucer Review*, Gordon Creighton, investigated the incident at the prestigious Royal Geographical Society in London, and found no record of there having been any archaeological expedition to Baian Kara Ula in the 1938, the year usually associated with the discovery but not given in Wegemann's article. Creighton was also the first to point out that the name of the mountains was more usually written "Bayan Khara Uula," Mongol words that mean "the good black mountains" ("Bayan Har Shan" in Chinese). He also tried to find a reference to the archaeologist, Chi Pu Tei, in the archives of the Society but could come up with no such name. Of course, no researcher has been able to better Creighton's attempts since then, either, despite a huge amount of effort. Likewise, all attempts to trace Tsum Um Nui or his report have failed.

In 1978 a book called *Sungods in Exile* [2] was published, edited by one David Agamon, who declared it to be the posthumous work of

a British scientist called Karyl Robin-Evans. The book describes an expedition to Baian Kara Ula led by Robin-Evans in 1947 with the aim to gather information about a disc that had been bought in India or Nepal by a colleague of his in Oxford, a Polish scholar named Sergei Lolladoff. According to Agamon, the expedition met with a tribe of dwarves in a remote valley in the region and these beings, the Dzopa, told him that their ancestors had come from a planet in the Sirius system and that they had been trapped on the earth in the year 1014 AD due to a mechanical problem with their spacecraft.

Years later, Agamon (using his real name, Gamon) wrote a letter to the British magazine *Fortean Times* (1994, No. 75, p. 75) stating that *Sungods in Exile* was his "favourite hoax," without revealing that he himself had been the author. "The author of this leg-pull received correspondence from as far away as Kiev," he added. "Don't ask me how I know." When Bob Rickard, the editor of the magazine, contacted Gamon as he prepared a comment about the case for the 109th edition of the publication, Gamon confessed at last.

For his book, Gamon had taken photographs of a fake disc, that many, judging by how frequently it appears on the Internet, even today believe to be authentic. These images are still published all over the world and many followers of the legend continue to search for Robin-Evans and Lolladoff without realising that they were fictitious characters invented by David Gamon.

British Columbian Parallel to the Dropa Legend?

On July 29th 1995, the editor of the *ORTK Bulletin* [3], Ed Komarek, published an article announcing his efforts to find a mysterious cave situated somewhere in British Columbia. Along with researcher Rob Bailey, Komarek had spent two weeks and several thousand dollars of helicopter time searching for what he referred to as "the first known civilian attempt to recover a crashed UFO."

Komarek wrote that he had first learnt about the possible crash in 1975. Larry Requa, an old family friend, then around 70 years old, told him the following story:

In 1938 a trapper went missing in a remote glacial area near the Alaskan/Canadian border. A search was made by the British Columbia Provincial Police, during which Constable Larry Requa chanced upon a cave. On entering to see if the trapper had taken shelter there, he was astonished to see five mummified bodies sitting on a stone bench. On closer inspection Requa discovered that the skeletons were anything but human: they were between 3 ½ and 4 feet tall, with extended craniums, long finger bones and large eye sockets. Only their small upper jaws had teeth. They were dressed in suits made of metallic cloth and one of them was wearing a metal medallion, engraved with stars.

The chamber itself had glassy walls, giving the impression that it had been created in the rock by "some device using high heat." There was a pile of rocks in the centre with a yellow, green, red and blue emblem resting on the top. When Requa picked it up "he saw images in his mind projected onto the wall."

When Komarek followed up the story many years later he assumed the old man had died, but it was not so. Requa was 91 years old when they interviewed him in 1995 and he was sticking to his claims. He would not reveal the exact location of the cave, in respect of the dead aliens. He desired that the cave "would remain undisturbed at least for his lifetime," as he considered it a sacred place.

Requa's opinion was that the beings had been "stranded" and unable to leave the Earth. If this is so, the similarity with the findings in the cave at Bayan Khara Uula is strengthened.

Komarek expressed the worry that his "Alien Recovery" team [4] would not be the first to reach the cave:

"Needless to say, we are concerned about an attempt by the military crash retrieval teams to beat us to the action or otherwise compromise our operation."

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1. Zaitsev V. Visitors from Outer Space. – *Sputnik*, 1967, No. 1.

2. Robin-Evans K. *Sungods in Exile: Secrets of the Dzopa of Tibet*. London: Neville Spearman, 1978.

3. Insiders' Corner – *ORTK Bulletin*, 1995, No. 10.

4. "Ed Komarek of Thomasville, Georgia and Rob Bailey of Troy, Michigan have formed a recovery team to excavate five alien skeletons from a remote glacial site located near the Alaskan/Canadian border." (Non-Sub. Post – 'Alien Recovery' Team, *UFO UpDates*, July 1, 1998.)

BOOK REVIEW

Dr. Paul LaViolette on the Possible Artificial Nature of Pulsars

Gerry Zeitlin

Introduction

The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) is simplistically perceived as the middle ground between the UFO research and the mainstream scientific communities, where science and UFO interests meet. It is more aptly the bastard child of the pair, its treatment by most scientists ranging from disdain through amusement, while UFO researchers cannot comprehend the point of it, since their data convinces them that we live in a well-traveled universe in which the use of electromagnetic beacons would be ludicrous.

SETI (i.e., such institutions as the *SETI Institute*) has recently been reaching toward the mainstream, by adopting an interest in *astrobiology*, a discipline concerned with theoretical issues in the development of life in off-Earth environments, and the study of past and present planetary environments with the solar system, as well as possible evidence of the existence of the molecules of life (as we know it) in these locations.

The three parties in this simple dynamic would each in turn be shaken by one of the claims of Dr. Paul LaViolette, who argues rather well in his recent book, *The Talk of the Galaxy*, that:

- *Pulsars are not natural objects,*
- *The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence is over, and*
- *We have been receiving electromagnetic signals from a Galactic society.*

And yes, Dr. LaViolette can claim to be an astrophysicist. Although his degree is in a somewhat different field, he has conducted observations with the VLA, and he has presented his case before the American Astronomical Society.

LaViolette was drawn to the study of pulsar signals as an outgrowth of his earlier research (see his books *Earth Under Fire* and *Beyond the Big Bang*) on *galactic superwaves* – periodic cataclysms in which galactic core explosions emit intense cosmic and electromagnetic radiation that moves out at the speed of light in an ever-expanding shell, sweeping through every sun-like star system they encounter.

His studies suggest that these superwaves were the trigger for the supernovas of which we are now aware. Not that every star they encounter "goes supernova" of course. The "cataclysmic" part of a superwave results from the temporary changes that each star undergoes when the wave sweeps by, and the effect of those changes on any planets in the star's system.

In his examination of data on supernova remnants and the pulsars associated with them, LaViolette noticed a number of oddities in the positioning of some of the most interesting pulsars – the *millisecond pulsars* whose rapid pulse rates have been the most difficult for astrophysicists to explain in terms of conventional pulsar models. As he explains in some detail in his book LaViolette's attention was caught by the spatial positioning of these pulsars, as they figured significantly in certain constellations that he had earlier proposed to have been defined in ancient times so as to draw the attention of future generations to the superwave phenomenon.

Before considering the various anomalies elucidated by LaViolette, it is useful to review at least briefly the history of pulsar research.

Background

It is well known that the original discoverers of pulsar signals, Jocelyn Bell and Anthony Hewish of Cambridge University, thought at first that they might be observing artifacts of some extraterrestrial civilization (Sturrock, 2000). After a brief period of consternation and contemplation, the "ETI" interpretation was discarded in favor of a proposal that the signals emanated from white dwarf stars that were somehow contracting and expanding, or dimming and brightening (Hewish *et. al.*, 1968).

The radially-pulsing white dwarf model was itself soon discarded after two pulsars with periods less than 0.1 second were found in the Crab and Vela supernova remnants. Out of some twenty different proposed theoretical models of possible sources of these pulsing signals, astronomers settled on the "neutron star lighthouse" put forward by Thomas Gold (1968). In that model, a neutron star emits two

opposed beams of synchrotron radiation confined to a narrow cone about the star's magnetic axis. We perceive pulses as the beams swing by us if we happen to be in the cone that they sweep out.

The original impression of pulsars (and other newly-discovered astrophysical objects and phenomena) as ETI beacons was not completely forgotten, however. In a note added to his published proceedings of the 1971 USSR conference on Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence (CETI), Sagan (1973) wrote:

"The very serious current energy problems both in quasar and in gravity wave physics can be ameliorated if we imagine these energy sources beamed in our direction. But preferential beaming in our direction makes little sense unless there is a message in these channels. A similar remark might apply to pulsars. <...>

"The pulsar story clearly shows that phenomena which at first closely resemble expected manifestations of ETI may nevertheless turn out to be natural objects – although of a very bizarre sort. But even here there are interesting unexamined possibilities. Has anyone examined systematically the sequencing of pulsar amplitude and polarization nulls? One would need only a very small movable shield above a pulsar surface to modulate emission to Earth. This seems much easier than generating an entire pulsar for communications".

Sagan's suggestion was not taken up by the astronomical community. Astronomers were unwilling to (publicly) consider an ETI-based source for the signals they were receiving.

Pulsar Behaviors

But SETI now considers pulsing beacons to be legitimate search targets. Perhaps this is what emboldened Paul LaViolette to revive Sagan's speculation. In *The Talk of the Galaxy* (2000), LaViolette reviews years of observations made since that CETI conference in 1971, paying particular attention to high-resolution recordings of individual pulses. He finds significant support for considering pulsars as possible ETI beacons.

Here is a brief listing of intricate behaviors seen in high-resolution recordings of individual pulses and pulse sequences that have been discussed by LaViolette:

- *Time-Averaged Regularity*. Time-averaged pulse contours do not change over days, months, or years. Timing of averaged profiles is similarly precise.
- *Single-pulse Variability*. Timing and shape of individual pulses vary considerably.
- *Pulse Drifting (certain pulsars)*. Individual pulses occur successively earlier and earlier within the averaged profile ("drifting pulsars"). For certain drifting pulsars, drift rate abruptly shifts in value. Or drift may be random with occasional recurring patterns.
- *Polarization Changes*. Polarization parameters vary within individual pulses, but time-averaged profile of polarization is constant.
- *Micropulses*. About half of observed pulsars exhibit micropulses within individual pulses. Micropulses typically last a few hundred microseconds. Or they may have oscillatory periods.
- *Pulse Modulation*. Signal strength may wax and wane over a series of pulses. Or this may be seen only when sampling every other pulse. Or maybe only at particular times in the profile.
- *Pulse Nulling*. Pulse transmissions may be interrupted for seconds or hours. When resumed, varying parameters continue from where they had left off!
- *Mode Switching*. More than one stable pulsation mode, with sudden switching between them.
- *Pulse Grammar*. "Grammatical" switching rules.
- *Glitching*. Pulse periods grow at a uniform rate (as though spinning pulsar is slowing down), but occasionally the period abruptly changes to a smaller value (pulsar instantaneously assumes a higher rotation rate?) and the sequence continues from there.

When averaged over several minutes or so, these complexities disappear, leaving only extreme regularity.

Spatial Distributions

The neutron star lighthouse model predicted that pulsars would be formed in supernova explosions and in fact several of them have been found near supernova remnants. If that were truly how they were formed, one would expect to find pulsars concentrated toward the center of the galaxy where most supernovas occur. However, LaViolette has noticed that the distribution of observed pulsars in the galactic plane differs markedly from that. (He also cites studies of neutron

stars associated with supernova remnants showing that the stars were *not* formed in the supernovas.) In fact, there is a clumping of them near a point one radian north of the galactic center. He depicts a sharp fall-off of pulsars just beyond that point. He also noticed that some of the most unusual pulsars are found right at that edge in the distribution.

The position of these anomalies at a one-radian angular distance from the galactic center is especially odd because 1) the radian is arguably a natural angular unit that would be recognized by many societies, and 2) this particular angular position would exist only from a point of view located exactly where we are – giving the impression of a deliberate signal or sign to our society or any society at our location.

In the same vein, LaViolette points out that the two fastest known pulsars are located at the two one-radian positions. These pulsars have other unique features that are listed by LaViolette.

LaViolette also looks at the constellations in which the pulsars appear, and finds curious associations. The constellation Sagitta (the "Celestial Arrow") is located "adjacent" to a one-radian point. The arrow of Sagittarius' bow (and the stinger of the Scorpion) designate the galactic center, and the cross of Crucis marks the southern galactic one-radian point. These star formations all involve "marker" imagery.

Since the system of constellations was presumably invented here in our ancient cultural past, these oddly congruent associations suggest that someone in our dark past was trying to embody and preserve knowledge of the significance of the pulsar signals for the benefit of future civilizations.

The Technology of Pulsars

Unlike Sagan, who accepted the conventional model of a pulsar but wondered if ETI could be adding fine-grained modulation, LaViolette proposes a way in which the steady emissions of stars could be focused into the pulses we see. He suggests that ETI might be using a nearly-collimated beam of synchrotron radiation, applying technology that we actually are developing today. This dramatically reduces the effect of distance in the equations governing the detectability of beacons over interstellar distances.

Although we may now have or soon will have the capability to transmit focused synchrotron beams, LaViolette's transmitting society has access to energy on a scale far exceeding ours. Although pulsars are probably not neutron stars, they are still stars – white dwarfs modified to produce the pulsar signals. In short, we are observing a Kardashev Type II civilization in terms of its ability to harness the total energy of a star.

Conclusion

Dr. LaViolette sets forth an audacious, yet actually well-grounded case for a possible ETI origin of "pulsar" signals – well-grounded in that it is based on little more than a meta-analysis of published scientific data on pulsars. Since the publication of his book, *The Talk of the Galaxy*, in 2000, there has been little response to the suggestion other than a certain amount of interest from the "enthusiast" community. This is a pity, because in the absence of a convincing rebuttal, or even a response of any kind from the community of astronomers and astrophysicists, LaViolette's proposition stands as a significant possibility. Insofar as it is concerned with one of the core issues of human society – the question of the possible existence of a galactic civilization – it is most deserving of further examination.

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